

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-4. (Canceled)

5. (Currently Amended) An assay method which includes:

bringing a putative modulator into contact with von Hippel-Lindau tumour suppressor (VHL) – interacting deubiquitinase enzyme 1 (VDU1) and an ubiquitinated VDU1 substrate;

determining the ability of the putative modulator to modulate the stabilisation and/or state of ubiquitination of the substrate by VDU1;

bringing the putative modulator into contact with a test system comprising VDU1 and hypoxia inducible factor-alpha (HIF- $\alpha$ );

determining the effect of the putative modulator on the stability and/or state of ubiquitination of HIF- $\alpha$ .

6. (Previously Presented) An assay method according to claim 5 in which the test system further comprises VHL.

7. (Previously Presented) An assay method according to claim 5, wherein the test system is a cell.

8. (Original) An assay method according to claim 7, wherein the cell is under hypoxic conditions.

9. (Original) An assay method according to claim 7, wherein the cell is under normoxic conditions.

10. (Currently Amended) An assay method according to claim 7, wherein the effect of the putative modulator on HIF- $\alpha$  stability is determined by the activity of a ~~HIF-responsive-reporter gene~~ including a promoter that comprises a target site recognized by HIF.

Claims 11-12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently Amended) An assay method according to claim 5, wherein the putative modulator is brought into contact with the test system, which is a cell under hypoxic conditions such that the HIF pathway is at a high level of activation, whereby ~~under conditions where~~ VDU1 is capable of stabilising HIF- $\alpha$ , in the absence of the modulator.

Claims 14-19. (Canceled)

Claim 20. (Cancelled)

Claims 21-36. (Canceled)